

THE BACKGROUND AND SCOPE
OF POINT 4

AN

ADDRESS

TO

SHANGHAI TIFFIN CLUB
TOWN HALL CLUB
NEW YORK

BY

BERTHA COBLENS JOSEPH
MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY BOARD



Lincoln's Birthday, 1952

Presented by Mr. HAYDEN

FEBRUARY 19 (legislative day, JANUARY 10), 1952.—Ordered
to be printed

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1952

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TO
THE
SHANGHAI TIFIN CLUB
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NEW YORK

BY
ELIETHA GOELINS JOSEPH
MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY BOARD



Lincoln's Birthday, 1952

Presented by Mrs. H. V. Vane
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Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, it is with a sense of high privilege that I talk to you today. In the first place, the subject of the day involves, in the studied opinion of many, many outstanding people, the greatest step forward in international relations in modern history. In the second place, this day is perhaps the most appropriate in the whole calendar for the presentation of the general idea. In the third place, this specific group, the Shanghai-Tiffin Group, is, by reason of its very composition, one of the organizations whose membership can be counted upon to have the background and experience to understand and appreciate, in all its ramifications, the meaning of the program which I shall attempt to describe.

It is my purpose to discuss in broad outline the purpose, the meaning, and the possibilities of what is popularly called the Point-4 Program.

WORLD CONDITIONS

I need not remind you, who know it all too well, that the world is in a state of turmoil. Our own country, blessed with natural resources, a form of government which develops to the full those resources, and a leadership capable and desirous of employing the resultant power and wealth—the greatest in the world—for the benefit of all mankind, is today busy with the problems of the preservation of peace through strength, and, by timely rearmament, is seeking to obviate threats of aggression.

OUR COUNTRY'S MIGHT

Notwithstanding our enormous efforts to gird ourselves with the armor of defense, we can truthfully repeat the words of Abraham Lincoln, whose birth we remember today, as he proclaimed them for the Thanksgiving Day of 1863:

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship: the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

ESSENCE OF POINT 4

Knowing that what was true in Lincoln's day is even more true in our own generation, our President, in his inaugural address of 1949, had this to say:

More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic

life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people. The United States is preeminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. The material resources which we can afford to use for the assistance of other peoples are limited. But our imponderable resources in technical knowledge are constantly growing and are inexhaustible. * * * Our aim should be to help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing, and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens.

DANGER OF DESPERATION

Solomon, the wisest of men, said, in one of his proverbs, that "To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." We know that that is as true today as it ever was. Throughout the world, wherever, by reason of tyranny or economic underdevelopment, masses of men have become desperate because they did not know from one day to the next where even a minimum of food could be found for themselves and for their families, many amongst them in utter desperation, have seemed prone to listen to almost any false promise and to subscribe to almost any philosophy, however unreasonable; because, having absolutely nothing to lose, as they saw it, any change might possibly improve their condition, but could not possibly reduce them to a poverty or level of degradation below that to which they had already been subjected. To them, truly, even the bitter has been calculated to seem somewhat sweet.

One unfamiliar with history might marvel and wonder how it came about that parts of the world, notably our own, have been able to achieve so much, while other parts, containing millions and millions of people, have next to nothing. To those of us with even a superficial knowledge of history and the willingness to think about its lessons, it is not too strange. There is no great difficulty in assigning a number of causes. There is one, however, which has not, in the past, received proper consideration, but which is emphasized by implication in a part of the President's great inaugural address, from which I quoted a few minutes ago.

ECONOMIC ISOLATIONISM

As civilization advanced with the Renaissance, and as the tide of material wealth gained in volume throughout the Industrial Revolution, there was a tendency, notwithstanding the studies of economists, to regard it as advantageous for each nation to keep its knowledge at home. No one should have a greater appreciation of such an attitude than a group presumably familiar with the history of the Chinese people.

In that great country of romantic history, which we call China, there have developed, from time to time in days of old, discoveries and inventions which might possibly have changed the whole course of history centuries ago. It was there that Marco Polo found men burning "stone," and it was the then unbelievable story of coal that he brought back from his travels. Amazingly enough, it was really the Chinese who invented movable type. One of their greatest achievements was the fabrication of silk. Along this line, everyone knows the story of how the Chinese sought to prevent a single silkworm from

leaving the country, and how, eventually, some were smuggled by way of Constantinople into Italy.

China then, with its genius for discovery, for invention, and for the development of things useful, as well as beautiful, kept its knowledge strictly to itself. We know today something of the end result. What might have been the course of history, had China sent forth its trained people to share with other nations these advances in technology in so many fields?

Loving the Chinese as we do, with all the friendliest feelings in the world toward its people, we might well pause and ponder a little bit to draw the proper lesson from its experiences and seek to evolve other and better methods of our own. We have already done so upon at least one historic occasion.

CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION

After the Boxer Rebellion was over, a huge indemnity was exacted of China by the western nations involved. As a party to the cause of the west, millions of dollars were allocated to the United States. It was, no doubt, an idea tempting to many, that the funds thus derived should be used within our own country for our own exclusive benefit. Wiser statesmanship prevailed, however, and for almost half a century, the proceeds of the indemnity have been used as a scholarship fund, whereby scores of carefully selected and intelligent Chinese have been educated in western science and western ways, in dozens of our great colleges and universities. The result of this has been to build up priceless and abiding friendships upon the spiritual side and to ameliorate, in some slight degree at least, some of the conditions in China which grew out of its backwardness in so many technical fields.

FUTILE SELFISHNESS

It should be understood that the Chinese were not alone in the world in the attempt to keep their know-how at home. Adam Smith, the father of modern economic theory, has this to say of English movements along the same line. After having reviewed attempts from the time of Elizabeth I to prevent by statute the export of commodities, he continues:

When such heavy penalties were imposed upon the exportation of the dead instruments of trade, it could not well be expected that the living instrument, the artificer, should be allowed to go free. Accordingly, by the 5th George I, chapter 27, the person who shall be convicted of enticing any artificer of, or in any of the manufactures of Great Britain, to go into any foreign parts, in order to practise or teach his trade, is liable for the first offense to be fined in any sum not exceeding £100, and to 3 months imprisonment, and until the fine shall be paid; and for the second offense, to be fined in any sum at the discretion of the court, and to imprisonment for 12 months, and until the fine shall be paid. By the 23d George II, chapter 13, this penalty is increased for the first offense to £500 for every artificer so enticed, and to 12 months imprisonment, and until the fine shall be paid; and for the second offense, to £1,000, and to 2 years imprisonment, and until the fine shall be paid.

Happily for mankind, in many of its aspects, although unfortunately not in all, the Mercantile Theory, under which such laws were promulgated, has, in this respect at least, been discarded.

AID TO SELF-HELP

The underlying theory of the Point-4 Program, therefore, is the sound economic policy, based upon the object lessons of history, that the exchange of technical information and the uplifting of the standards in so-called backward areas will be of vast benefit to us, as well as of incalculable value to the inhabitants of those areas. The program has been in work long enough to afford a few striking examples. These, I quote from the 1952 address of our President upon the State of the Union.

This last year we made available millions of bushels of wheat to relieve famine in India. But far more important, in the long run, is the work Americans are doing in India to help the Indian farmers themselves raise more grain. With the help of our technicians, Indian farmers, using simple, inexpensive means, have been able since 1948 to double the crops in one area in India. One farmer there raised 63 bushels of wheat to the acre, where 13 bushels had been the average before.

This is our Point-4 Program at work. It is working—not only in India—but in Iran, Paraguay, Liberia—in 33 countries around the globe. Our technical missionaries are out there. We need more of them. * * *

BREAD UPON THE WATERS

It has been well said that the Point-4 Program is in the American tradition, that it offers better living conditions, not ideologies, certainly not ideologies as such. It is, in one sense, a resumption of the efforts and activities originally undertaken by American missionaries, and continued by them in parts of the world to this day. Its primary objective is to show people how to achieve better living conditions by their own efforts. This is no give-away program, in any sense of the term. It represents a capital investment, as any qualified accountant will agree. Just as in the case of a new enterprise, engineering, architectural, legal, and similar expenses are capitalized because they are expected to yield an eminently satisfactory return, thereby representing additional invested capital, so must the immediate outlays for the developments of backward countries be capitalized. They are, in no sense whatsoever, an operating expense from any accounting viewpoint.

As the level of what, for lack of a better phrase, we might call technological civilization is raised throughout the world, so, in even greater proportion, will the number of our potential customers be increased—people who will need and want, and who can pay for, our manufactured products. As our technical missionaries go throughout the world, they will find a multitude of profitable and satisfactory outlets for our investment capital. It is an absolute certainty that the introduction of a single new machine will eventually call for the erection of a plant, sooner or later, to house more such machines. The development of a new product, the discovery of additional mineral wealth, will call for additional machinery, and in some cases, for compatible and additional raw materials.

COOPERATION NOT CHARITY

At the outset, the technical assistance provided under Point 4 is made available only when the other government involved indicates its willingness to participate by meeting certain obligations, including a fair share of the cost.

To summarize, it should be clearly understood that we are not giving charity, and the other parties do not want charity. We want to help them help themselves, and they want to help themselves. The days of Marco Polo are over. The printed page, denied to the rest of the world by the Chinese, has, thanks to Gutenberg and the West, become the vehicle for the spreading of news of the better life in the uttermost corners of the earth. In almost all nooks and corners of the world, too, the ubiquitous moving picture has demonstrated to at least some of the population the possibilities inherent in the proper development of resources of one kind or another everywhere existing, be they human resources, minerals, metals, or farm products.

PROSPERITY MEANS PEACE

The very peace of the world may depend upon the satisfaction of the legitimate wants of the people of the underdeveloped areas and the ultimate prosperity of the world certainly depends upon it.

At the moment, 33 countries, or more, are, in one way or another committed to this program. There is only one word of caution to be uttered, and that in a constructive spirit. It is generally agreed that that there are at the moment far too many agencies concerned with various angles and segments of this great undertaking. The number of these agencies is almost amazing. The consensus of sound and informed opinion is to the effect that there should be just one. Along this line, I should like to suggest that this field is of such extraordinary magnitude and importance, affecting, as it does, both our international relations and our economic well-being, that it should be headed and directed by an officer of Cabinet rank. A Secretary of International Commerce and Development, or if you prefer, a Secretary of Peace, or of Peaceful Cooperation, should be added to the Cabinet. Our Department of State is busy, and should continue to be busy with matters of high policy, within its proper field. Such practical and primarily industrial and commercial matters as are involved in this all-important program, should be committed to men trained and experienced in those fields.

With this program, effectively administered, there will eventually be no room for hunger and desperation. Ethiopia, we are told, has topsoil 12 feet deep, capable, under modern agricultural conditions, of feeding the whole of Europe. Should it be permitted to lie fallow for the want of proper implements? The barren soil of Africa has its counterpart in the undeveloped minds of people, who have, so to speak, been cut off from the implements of modern education. They have it within themselves to supply to us and to the rest of the world friendship and cooperation in the development of proper free government, in the sense we hold such government dear. Should we not help these people to distinguish the true from the false, the constructive from the destructive?

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

There will always be a few who will be out of sympathy with this great and constructive undertaking because "we never did it before." These are of a class with those Chinese who, in the course of their worship of their ancestors, were content with all things as they were. We Americans have always taken pride in our ability to devise new ideas and new methods, new techniques and new approaches. Let us look, therefore, not to our ancestors but to our children and their children. In that way, we shall best contribute to the steady advance of civilization.

It is for the very purpose of obviating the evils of old-time imperialism which, through the centuries, has led to so much discontent, suffering, and war, that our President, voicing the ardent desire of our people for peace and order throughout the world, has assumed the leadership in this great movement for those objectives, a movement already known to history as Point 4.

